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Downham Market Urban District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT OF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1938.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit to you my Annual Report for the year 1938, set out in accordance with Circular 1728 (England) of the Ministry of Health.

General Remarks.

As a comparatively prosperous agricultural town, Downham Market can claim to have its prosperity reflected in the general health of its inhabitants, and in the absence of any serious epidemics during the year.

If this standard is to be maintained, it is, of course, necessary to constantly improve Housing conditions and other public services. These matters are now under active consideration by your Council.

During 1938 the population of Downham increased by 34, and 9 new houses were erected.

The Birth-rate of 12·87 per 1000 of population is higher than for the previous year, but slightly below the rate for England and Wales as a whole (15·1)

It is pleasing to record that there were no deaths during the year from puerperal causes, and no deaths of infants below one year of age.

The two chief causes of Death were Heart Disease and Cancer.

Five cases of Scarlet Fever occurred in the last quarter of 1938. The rainfall during this period was more than average, totalling 7·27 inches.

I am,

Yours obediently,

WILLIAM W. WILDMAN.
M.B. Ed., D.P.H. Lond.
Medical Officer of Health.

5. 6. 39.

Public Health Officers of the Local Authority.

(a) Medical.

Dr. J. Gibb, your previous part-time M.O.H., relinquished his appointment on September 30th, 1938.

Your present Medical Officer took up duty on October 1st, 1938. is engaged in whole-time public health work, and holds the following combined appointment :

Medical Officer of Health to Downham Urban District Council
Downham Rural „ „
Marshland Rural „ „
} and Assistant Medical Officer to the Norfolk County Council.

(b) Others:

One whole-time Sanitary Inspector, who also acts as Surveyor.
Qualifications : M.R.San.I., M.I.M. and Cy.E. Appointed on 1st March. 1938 as successor to Mr. J. Miles.

There have thus been two staff changes in the year under review.

SECTION A.

1. General Statistics:

Area in Acres	1,003
Population (estimated mid-1938)... ...	2,563
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1938)	817
Rateable value	£12,523
Sum represented by a Penny Rate ...	£48

2. Vital Statistics:

		Total	M	F	England & Wales
LIVE BIRTHS	Legitimate	33	11	22	
	Illegitimate	Nil	Nil	Nil	
	Birth rate per 1000 estimated population	12·87			15·1
STILL BIRTHS :	Legitimate	2	1	1	
	Illegitimate	Nil			
	Rate per 1000 Total (Live & Still) births	57·14			

DEATHS :	29	13	16	
D. Rate per 1000 estimated resident population	11·31			11·6
Deaths from Puerperal Causes	—			
Rate per 1000 total births	—			
Puerperal Sepsis	Nil			
Other Puerperal Causes	Nil			
Death Rate of infants under one year of age :—				
All Infants per 1000 live-births ...	Nil			53
Legitimate infants per 1000 legit live-births	Nil			
Illegitimate ,, ,, illegit ,,	Nil			
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	9			
from Measles ,, ...	Nil			
from Whooping-cough ,, ...	Nil			
from Diarrhœa (under 2-yrs)	Nil			
Rate per 1000 live-births	Nil			5·5

Causes of Death	M.	F		M.	F.
Cancer	4	5	Appendicitis	1	0
Cerebral Hæmorrhage	1	1	Liver Disease (excl. Cirrhosis) ..	0	2
Heart Disease	3	4	Other digestive diseases	0	1
Other circ ; Diseases	0	1	Senility	2	0
Bronchitis	0	1	Violence	1	1
Peptic Ulcer	1	0			

Social Conditions and Unemployment.

Downham Market remains the prosperous agricultural and business centre it has been in previous years. From the trade standpoint it can claim to be one of the most successful small towns in Norfolk.

The Manager of Downham Branch Labour Exchange informs me that there has been no increase in Unemployment during 1938.

The Relieving Officer reports as follows :-"In the Urban District 34 persons are in receipt of Outdoor Relief, males 10, females 20, children 4. The numbers being admitted to the Public Assistance Institution on account of destitution are decreasing each year, while the numbers admitted for treatment and nursing is increasing; I find very little objection on the part of patients to be taken to the Institution, so it may be assumed that the horror of the Poor Law is passing away:"

There were 65 marriages in the Urban District during 1938.

SECTION B. General Provisions of Health Services for the Area.

Hospitals. The nearest General Hospital serving Downham Market is the West Norfolk and King's Lynn General Hospital. With increasing transport facilities patients now have easy access to Hospital Treatment in London and Cambridge.

Infectious Disease cases are now removed to the County Isolation Hospital at East Dereham. This new Hospital serves the greater part of the County and was opened in September, 1938.

The Downham Public Assistance Institution receives the more advanced cases in your area for treatment and nursing.

Ambulances. The Downham Ambulance (Red Cross) stationed in Downham Market serves the area,

Clinics There are no Council Clinics in your District, but a Voluntary Welfare Centre exists and does useful work.

Public Medical Service. This scheme provides increased facilities for medical treatment, and I am advised by the medical practitioners in Downham Market that this service is working admirably.

Laboratory Facilities. Specimens for laboratory investigation are mostly forwarded to Norwich and examined in the County Laboratory. The following work was carried out during 1938 in respect of Urban District :

Nature of Specimen	Result Positive	Result Negative
Swabs for Diphtheria	1	15
Sputa for Tuberculosis	4	17
Blood for Widal Reaction ...	—	3
Specimens for Typhoid	—	2

SECTION C. Sanitary circumstances of the Area.

Water Supply. Mains water supply to Downham Market is from the Wisbech Water Works Company at Marham. Those houses not yet connected derive their supply from shallow wells The latter are still numerous and are now in course of being surveyed by your Medical Officer and Sanitary Inspector with a view to eliminating as many as possible: There were no additions of water mains during the year. The Marham supply was examined chemically and bacteriologically at the source in March, 1938 and found to be of excellent quality for all domestic purposes. One pump supply was examined bacteriologically in November, 1938 and found to be unsatisfactory Your Council decided to replace it with mains water, and this has now been carried out.

Refuse disposal:

(a) **Dry refuse:** This is collected by a lorry once weekly and tipped into a quarry.

(b) **Wet refuse:** Following a report by your Medical Officer and Sanitary Inspector on the unsatisfactory working of the present sewage plant in Downham Market, your Council decided to make a comprehensive survey of the existing sewerage arrangements with a view to meeting the greatly increased modern requirements. This survey is now in progress according to schedule.

Sanitary Accommodation.

Number of conversions ... Nil

Number of closets of each type remaining at the end of the year :—

Vaults type 10. Pail closets 20. Water flushed 768.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area (excluding house inspections).

(a)	Number of premises inspected	22
(b)	Number of notices served	7
(c)	Number of notices complied with	7
(d)	Proceedings for non-compliance	Nil

No action was necessary with regard to the Sanitary condition of shops and offices, and no cases of Smoke nuisance arose during the year.

There are no public or private swimming pools open to the public within the area of the Council.

Disinfestation. One Council House was fumigated by means of Cimex by the Local Authority.

SECTION D. HOUSING.

A Survey of all the unfit houses in Downham Market was commenced by your Medical Officer and Sanitary Inspector in December, 1938, and this has now been largely completed. A detailed report on this will be given in the Annual Report for 1939.

1. Inspections during the year:-

1.	(a) Total number of houses inspected for defects	50
	(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	73
2.	Number of houses found to be unfit for human habitation	37
3.	Number of houses (exclusive of 2.) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for habitation	—

2. Remedy of defects during the year WITHOUT service of formal notices:-

Number of defective houses rendered fit by informal action by L.A. or their officers ... 15

3. Action under Statutory powers during the year.

(a)	Proceedings under sections 9, 10, 16 of the Housing Acts, 1936:	—
	1. Number of houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	
	2. Number of houses rendered fit after service of formal notices :-	
	(a) By owners	—
	(b) By L.A. in default of owners...	—
(b)	Proceedings under Public Health Acts:	
	1. Number of houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	—
	2. Number of houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:	
	(a) By owners	—
	(b) By Local Authority in default of owners...	—
(c)	Proceedings under Housing Act, 1936, sections 11 and 13:	
	1. Number of houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made	—
	2. Number of houses demolished in respect of Demolition orders	—
(d)	Proceedings under Housing Act, 1936, Section 12:	
	Number of separate tenements in respect of which Closing Orders were made	—

4. Housing Act, 1936: Overcrowding.

(a)	1. Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	2
	2. Number of families dwelling therein	2
	3. Number of persons dwelling therein	15
(b)	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year...	—
(c)	1. Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	—
	2. Number of persons concerned in such cases	—

5. Number of New Houses built during 1938.

(a)	By private enterprise	9
(b)	Under Housing Acts by Local Authority	—

SECTION E. Inspection and Supervision of Food.

Food Inspection. No adulteration of any foodstuff was detected during the year.

All dairy farms and cowsheds in the Urban District were inspected during the year.

(a) **Milk :** Number of farms and dairies inspected 15
Number of samples taken 6
Number of Cowkeepers registered 7
,, ,, Premises ,, ... 7
,, ,, Retailers ,, ... 8
,, ,, Accredited Producers 1

(b) **Meat :** Number of registered slaughterhouses 6
These were all inspected by your Medical Officer and Sanitary Inspector in November, 1938.

Carcases inspected.

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number inspected	170	30	30	150	300

Number killed not available.
Number condemned : No carcases or organs were condemned during the year.

SECTION F. Infectious Diseases.

Five cases of Scarlet Fever and one case of Diphtheria occurred during the year, all in children of school age. Those cases which could not be satisfactorily isolated at home were removed by Ambulance to the County Isolation Hospital at East Dereham.

Disease	Total notified	admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Scarlet Fever	5 ...	4 ...	Nil
Diphtheria	1 ...	— ...	Nil
Erysipelas	1 ...	1 ...	Nil
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	1 ...	1 ...	Nil
Pneumonia	2 ...	1 ...	Nil
Totals	10	7	Nil

Despite the distance between the new Isolation Hospital at East Dereham and Downham Market no difficulty has been experienced in getting patients to agree to enter the Isolation Hospital This is in no small measure due to their appreciation of the excellent and up-to-date methods of treatment now available at this Hospital, and to the amenities enjoyed there.

Distribution of Ages.

	Years of Age. 5—10	10—15	35 45	45—65
Diphtheria ...	1	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever ...	3	2	—	—
Pneumonia ...	2	—	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	1	—
Erysipelas ...	—	—	—	1

TUBERCULOSIS. New Cases and Mortality during 1938.

Age-groups	New Cases Respiratory M	Respiratory F	Non-Respiratory M	Non-Respiratory F
1—5	...	...	1	...
5—15	...	...	...	1
15—25	2	...	...	...
35—45	...	1	...	...

There were no deaths from Tuberculosis during 1938.